

Constitution Day

The Assistant Deputy Secretary for Innovation and Improvement announced that, pursuant to legislation passed by Congress, educational institutions receiving Federal funding from the U.S. Department of Education (Department) are required to hold an educational program pertaining to the United States Constitution on September 17 of each year. This year Constitution Day will be observed on September 16, 2005, commemorating the September 17, 1787 signing of the Constitution.

K-12 educators will find some informational resources pertaining to the Constitution listed below. In addition to these, the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is aware that there may be other public and private resources available that may be helpful to educational institutions in implementing Constitution Day. While the ADE does not endorse any particular program or Web site, this information is provided because it may be of use to educational institutions developing their Constitution Day programs.

Constitution Day Resources

K-8th grade Social Studies Benchmarks can be found on the ADE website at

<http://arkedu.state.ar.us/curriculum/benchmarks.html#Social>

Grade Specific Sample Teaching Strategies are provided for each of the Student Learning Expectations. This document contains several ideas and strategies for incorporating civics and government lessons into Constitution Week. Teachers should be directed to the fourth strand, which is Power, Authority and Governance (PAG) for ideas that relate to Constitution Week.

The Bill of Rights Institute is offering free educational and programming materials to schools to help teachers organize events to commemorate Constitution Day, scheduled for this year on September 16, 2005. Click www.BillofRightsInstitute.org to access the following:

- Two Constitution lesson plans: one for high school and one for middle school
- A biographical essay about James Madison, the Father of the Constitution, that includes an audio component
- A Founders Gallery that features images of the Founders
- Lesson plan about the Bill of Rights that includes a short video
- Media-focused lesson plan on the First Amendment

The National Constitution Center, <http://www.constitutioncenter.org> (click on Explore the Constitution), created this section to help teachers teach the Constitution and other civic-related topics to students of all ages. These lesson plans meet the Center for Civic Education's National Standards for Civics and Government and offer elementary grades K-4, middle grades 5-8, and high school grades 9-12 teachers a selection of classroom activities, readings and Web resources. Each month this page will feature a new lesson plan highlighting recent Constitutional issues as well as historical events such as the Constitutional Convention. Access the Interactive Constitution at <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/constitution/>. Print a copy of the Constitution for students to analyze in small groups by clicking on the following address <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/constitution/constitution.pdf>

AboutGovernment The Dirkson Congressional Center contains numerous resources containing information about our government. Visit them at <http://www.congresslink.org>, and for a direct link to various historical documents such as The Articles of Confederation, Bill of Rights, Federalist Papers, Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution visit http://www.aboutgovernment.org/print_historicaldocuments.htm#constitution

100 Milestone Documents is *A National Initiative on American History, Civics, and Service* available at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?flash=true&page=milestone>

We invite all Americans to participate in a series of events and programs to get us thinking, talking and teaching about the rights and responsibilities of citizens in our democracy. At the heart of this initiative are 100 milestone documents of American history. These documents reflect our diversity and our unity, our past and our future, and mostly our commitment as a nation to continue to strive to "form a more perfect union." We want everyone—students, teachers, parents, and the general public—to read these milestone documents, consider their meaning, discuss them, and decide which are the most significant and why. This initiative creates a number of ways to do that—through classroom activities and competitions, and votes. Directly access the U.S. Constitution at <http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true&doc=9>.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) <http://www.archives.gov/> is the link for the homepage. Constitution Day specific materials may be found at <http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/constitution-day/>. The National Archives also has a Web site with other information available on the U.S. Constitution online at: <http://www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/constitution.html> Access high-resolution images of the Charters of Freedom documents, particularly the U. S. Constitution on this page <http://www.archives.gov/historical-docs/document.html?doc=3&title.raw=Constitution%20of%20the%20United%20States>

Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools:

<http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/resources/matrix.html>

CMS practice examples show how schools and teachers are educating students for democracy. Reviewed by an advisory group of civic learning experts, the examples align with the Civic Mission of Schools' [six promising approaches to civic learning](#) and demonstrate [criteria](#) for high-quality, civic learning practice. The first is knowledge of government. Examples are by grade level, K-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: <http://uscis.gov/graphics/citizenship/>

This site is for immigrants but contains flash cards and a naturalization self-test that might help students recognize how much or how little they know about the Constitution and other government facts. It is strictly drill and kill.

The White House: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids/constitution/> This site contains links to Constitution facts, quizzes, and other resources

The Constitution for Kids: <http://www.usconstitution.net/constkidsK.html> The Constitution for grades K-3 a basic fact sheet with a link for pictures of the Constitution.

The Library of Congress: <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/ndlpedu/lessons/constitu/const-l1.html> From the Library of Congress, a 3 day lesson on drafting the Constitution.

The Center for Civic Education: <http://www.civiced.org/> The Center for Civic Education will post seven lessons on its web site in August 2005. These age-appropriate lessons are suggested for use at each of the following grade levels: Kindergarten, Grades 1–2, Grades 3–4, Grades 5–6, Grades 7–8, Grades 9–10, and Grades 11–12. **Permission to duplicate these lessons is given provided the following credit line is used: *Reprinted with permission from the Center for Civic Education. Copyright 2005. Center for Civic Education.*** www.civiced.org

Justice Learning: <http://justicel.bootnetworks.com/constitutionday.asp> Justice Learning site with video and audio material, as well as lesson plans on the constitution

The Constitution Rights Foundation: http://www.crf-usa.org/constitution_day/constitution_day_home.htm The Constitutional Rights Foundation presents a series of free online lessons, resources from the CRF catalog, and Internet links to help educators design their own Constitution Day program.

Constitution Day, Inc.: <http://www.constitutionday.com> Constitution Day, Inc. has been celebrating for the past eight years by simultaneously reciting the Preamble with schools and the fifty Governors offices on a national teleconference call. Visit the website for information on how to join the nation in the recitation of the Preamble and educational material.